

Our forests: more precious than ever

Forests in rural landscapes, traditionally valued for wood and maple syrup production, are now recognized for the diverse ecological goods and services they provide. They clean our air and water, they store carbon dioxide, and much more.

On Feb. 11 in Ivanhoe, Danijela Puric-Mladenovic, landscapes analyst with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, presents Our Forests: Benefits and Threats.

Forests provide diverse economic, social and environmental benefits to rural and urban communities across southern Ontario. While our appreciation of forest diversity and benefits has been evolving, our forests are more vulnerable and threatened than ever before in human history. Risks to our forests also have a negative impact on the livelihood of communities. Traditional ways of forest and landscape management need to change and we need to build forest and landscape resilience. Come and discuss some innovative ideas with the community.

Puric-Mladenovic specializes in landscape architecture and urban forestry. She is developing innovative tools for forest conservation, land-use planning, and restoration of Ontario's landscapes.

This triple-header also features Ernie Demuth, a member of the Ontario Professional Foresters Association and the senior compliance technician for the Bancroft Minden Forest Company. He will introduce the silvicultural methods used in forestry and the challenges in dealing with beech bark disease. The impacts of this disease on the hardwoods of Hastings and Haliburton counties will be significant.

Tim Gray, forest management specialist with Forests Ontario's 50 Million Trees Program, will give an overview of subsidized tree planting programs that provide substantial savings to landowners and deliver a high level of technical and operational assistance. Landowners will discover how they may reduce taxes on forested properties.

Come and learn all about our forests on Thursday, Feb. 11 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Huntington Veterans Community Hall, 11379 Highway 62, in Ivanhoe. An entrance fee of \$5 per person (or a donation) will help cover costs. Children are free.

The Hastings Stewardship Council promotes a healthy and sustainable environment that contributes to the viability of agricultural and natural resources in Hastings County. For more information, contact Matt Caruana at 613-391-9034 or info@hastingsstewardship.ca.